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Valiant Goloks

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- Gear reviews and tests - Edged tools - Long blades -



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Description :

High quality and cheap Indonesian knives.

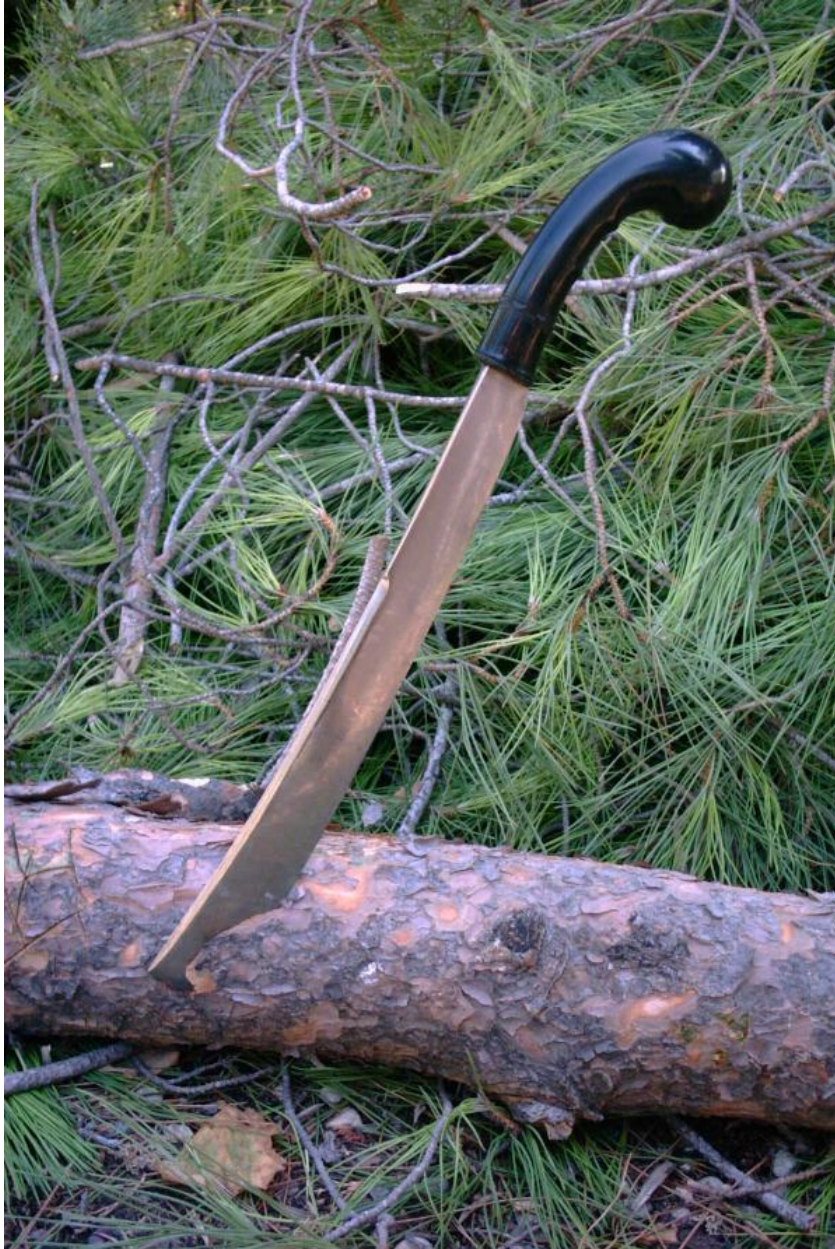
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The [Golok](#) is a traditional knife of [Indonesia](#). The [Khukuri](#) or [Kukri](#) is a traditional knife of [Nepal](#).

I recently acquired some Indonesian goloks from the Australian based [Valiant Trading Co.](#)

A Valiant Survival Golok Medium at work



It might be strange, but lengths are in inches [\[1\]](#), and weights in grams [\[2\]](#).

From the bottom, you see

1. **Survival Golok Medium**, 22 3/4" overall, 14 1/2" convex forged blade, distal tapered, false edge, horn handle, partial tang, superb ironwood sheath with horn circlings and fittings, 800 grams with scabbard, 36 USD (!).
2. **Golok Loka 1**, 22 3/4" overall, 16" convex forged blade, distal tapered, hard wood handle, partial tang with brass ferrule, hardwood sheath, 600 gr with scabbard, 36 USD (!)
3. On the top is my [Himalayan imports Chiruwa Angh Khola](#), 16.5 inches total 11.5 inches blade, 1000 grams with

scabbard, for reference.



Inspection

First I must say that I was impressed by the quality of the blades. They are brush finished, and come scarily [\[3\]](#) sharp. Forging took place, and the symmetry shows it, although less visible symmetry defects are seen than on the HI Chiruwa AK. There are some superficial forge splits on the back of the Loka blade. I epoxied the sheath of the Survival G to fix the bottom horn fitting and belt loop fitting, and the sheath of the G Loka had split along the glued joint of the two parts, so I epoxied it back. Unnoticeable now. Changes in air wetness and careless transport from Australia to France must account for this .

The Survival G sheath is a marvel and fits tight (the fit can actually be controlled with the horn circling). The handle is marvelously comfortable and rounded, finger grooved, and fits nicely in the hand, yet providing a nice secure hold for swinging movements due to the rounded butt. The feeling of the blade when swinging is slightly lighter than the Chiruwa, it must weight a 100 grams less.

The Loka is a short sword, swings quickly, and feels the same than a Cold-Steel Gurkha light to swing. The handle is comfortable, and the angle helps retain the blade.

The steel of these is spring steel. The hardening seems perfect, the blades are hardened from the start (+ 1cm) of the handle to the tip, constant at the same harness on the edge, but using a clay differential hardening process similar to the one used for Japanese swords. A file running on the edge seems to point between 54 and 58 RC, which is good, even perfect, for this type of blade. The back would be around 45 RC, which is spring temper, good.

As a comparison MY HI Chiruwa is 60 HRC on the middle of the edge, and not really hardened at the tip and handle, which I find a problem, as I rolled edges twice now in these places. On the other side, I could hammer them back...

Closer view, the top one is called a Badik:



Tests

So I took the CS Gurkha light, HI Chiruwa , Survival Golok and Golok Loka to the garden. I tried them on all kind of wood, dried and hard, green soft, thick thin, high in the air, low on the ground, some mixed with earth and sand...

As expected, the Survival is wonderful, no vibration felt when hitting hardwood, very very good penetration of both hardwood and green wood. The handle feel is marvellous. The blade never sticks, and the reach it gets is superb, thus saving my hands in deep bush. The belt carrying is to my taste much more comfortable than the Chiruwa, because it is flat, and 200 grams lighter, so one can just stick it under the belt, and not really feel it. The square tip proves useful for reaching far away things and push-cutting with a rapier-like movement. The sharpened false edge is good for splitting wood and cleaning bamboos.

The Loka, I was quite dubious. The result is quite good, the reach is fantastic, and the penetration is quite good too. The handle is comfortable, although the carving is slightly aggressive [\[4\]](#). I stuck the tip in a wood trunk and began bending the blade, I got to 45 degrees and back, no trouble. It is a saber, and if you know the proper movement of pulling while hitting, the cutting effect is really amazing. It began showing it's limits when I started cutting a 4" very dried nut-tree branch, but nevertheless did it with just some more effort, weight being compensated with impact speed. Belt carry is also hardly noticed except for length. There is no loop hole, but a wooden clip!

The blades did not move in their partial tangs, even after heavy whacking on hard wood.

The Chiruwa is my reference for hatchet use [\[5\]](#), it is excellent on hard wood, not much reach, the handle is OK, but I cannot say comfortable, sticks a bit in wood, due to the saber grind, and is generally more physical. It is a pain, I find, to carry it on the belt, as it weights 1000 grams, pulls my pants down, has a pointy sheath, must be looped in the belt, therefore not allowing quick deposit. But it comes with a burnished and small knife.

The CS is my reference for edge holding and bush whacking. Light, flat package, needs a loop to carry, but due to it's flatness can also just be stuck under the belt, sticks a lot in wood [\[6\]](#), but penetration is OK.

The khukuris, due to their geometry have sometimes a tendency to glance in the hand at impact, which may be dangerous. I found none of this with these golok blades. But the cutting ability is surprising, and may show dangerous to inexperienced hands. [\[7\]](#)

To my surprise, a few 1" and 2 " branches were cut without even feeling an impact with the Survival G.

Edge holding My preference goes to the CS, very narrowly followed by the Survival G and the Loka G, Chiruwa last. The Chiruwa is last because any bad hit outside the hardened area is a dent or rolled edge. I did tests on some wood that was sand impregnated, as well as very hard wood, and this order reflects the resultant sharpness. The CS, Survival and Loka were back to original in a 1 minute job, the Chiruwa took a bit more (5 min) on some parts of the edge (not sure 60 RC is good), and needed hammering on one dent. (All blades started with the same sharpness).

All blades suffered scratches, which was expected although a bit less showed on the goloks, because they are more hardened. None of the blades sustained damages.

The only negative thing I can say about the Golok is about the partial tang. But it is only a theoretical aspect of the blade construction, and only use will tell how resistant it is. So far my tests could not put it in defect, even when hitting with the blade sideways. It seems anyway that Valiant has got some full tang with scales versions. I personally prefer this partial tang mounting, because a lot of the shocks vibrations are absorbed, making work with it much more pleasant. The partial tang mounting is traditional in Indonesia, and I would guess that a few millenaries of such construct have taught these people how to do it well.

Survival G blade thickness



Survival G in hand



G Loka in hand



Comparison of the packages



Compared to a HI 16.5 Chiruwa AK and HI 18" Gelbu Special



More on Malay and Indonesian weapons can be read at [Malay World Edged Weapons](#) [8]

Conclusion

I'll just say that at a minimum of one third of the price of the other blades [9], these Indonesian blades are very **very good value**. They sustain the comparison and often exceed the performances of the other blades. They excel as machetes, and are overall good replacement hatchets.

I have not and will not cover the self-defence aspect, but one can imagine what the Golok Loka can do, and what are it's advantages in this field....

I personally find the geometry much more useful and versatile than khukuris.

My overall preference order is therefore:

1. Survival Golok for its versatility.
2. Loka Golok, for it's weight and length.
3. HI Chiruwa for it's construction.
4. CS kukri for its overall good performances, and light weight.

There is some other blades geometry that I want to try at Valiant Co, and I'll post new reviews when I get them. [10]

Valiant blades are traditional blades whose size and weight has been changed to work with taller, and more massive

westerners, by Suwandi Wigunadharma, the owner. No doubt he knows what he does.

I have since tried a damascus blade, and they are excellent too. review to come too.

I am in no way related to Valiant Co, and the comments I did on Valiant Co goloks, Himalayan Imports khukuris and Cold Steel kukri are only valid in the context of this comparative test, as they are all nice blades.

Post-scriptum :One of the purposes of Valiant co, is to try to maintain traditional Indonesian bladesmithing alive. Wandu (Mr. Suwandi WD) operates his business in a passionate way, and mainly as a hobby, his passion helps sustain lives and know-how in Indonesia.

[1] because I understand inches better than centimetres for blades and knives sizes

[2] I'll never get used to pound and ounces

[3] the edge angle must approach 20 degrees on the Survival Golok

[4] it will get smoother with time

[5] 750 grams

[6] due to the thick epoxy coating!

[7] Please check the [Handling and working with knives, big blades, axes and hatchets.](#)

[8] to which I am not related

[9] 30 US \$ versus more than 100USD, transport excluded.

[10] check [here](#) for the latest information.